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— PLEA FOR ALPHABETIC REFORM



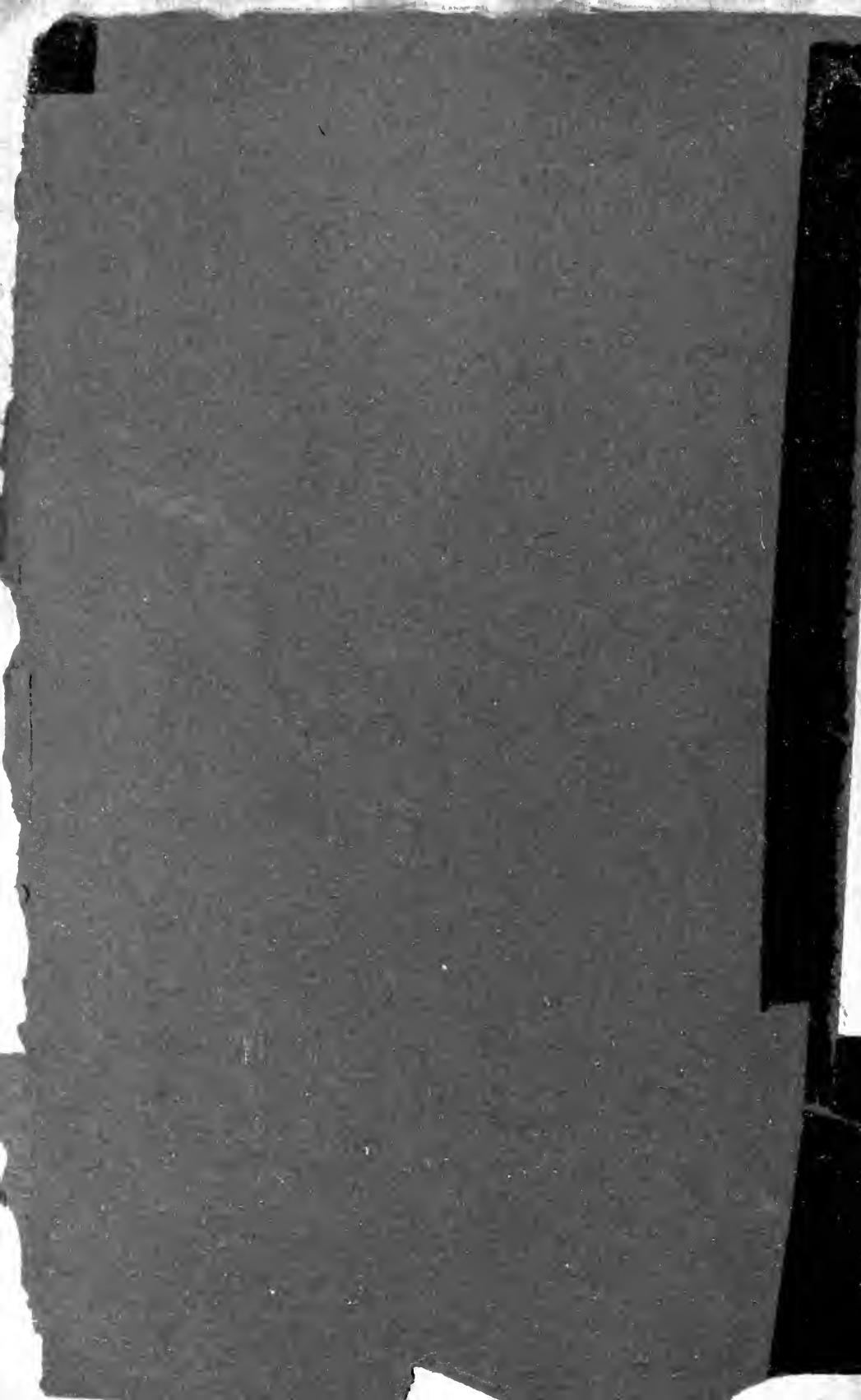


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A Plea for
Alphabetic Reform

by Benj. Pitman



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To

A. T. Harris, Esqr.

Commissioner of Education, U. S. A.
whose intelligent devotion
and practical administration
have been an ever-present stimulus
to the Grand Army of American Teachers,
in securing the most efficient methods
of Educational Training
for the nineteen million children
who attend the Public Schools,

This Plea,
for the removal of a grave obstruction
to educational progress,
is respectfully dedicated,
by one

whose sixty-nine years of practical experiment
and active propagandism,
have only deepened his conviction
of the great advantages,
Educational, Moral, Political and Economic,
that would attend the adoption
of a simple and scientific representation
of the National Language.

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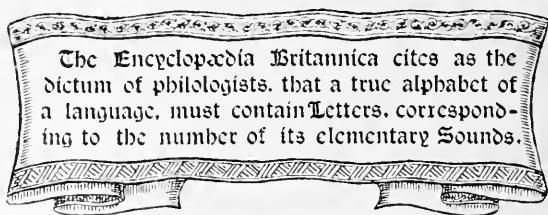
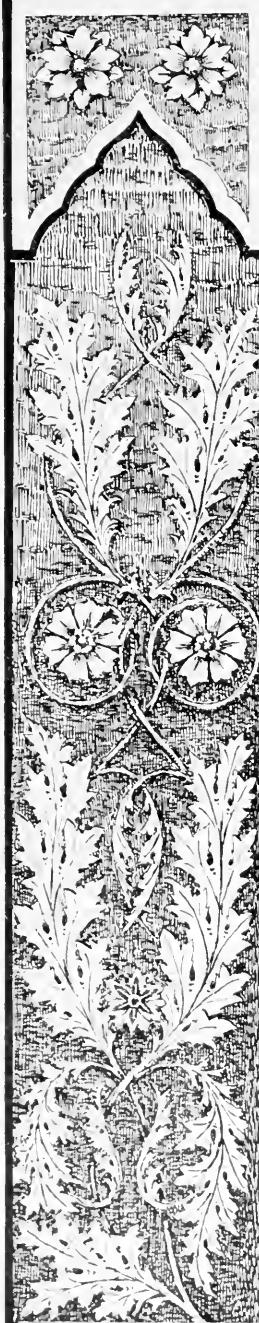
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A Plea for Alphabetic Reform.

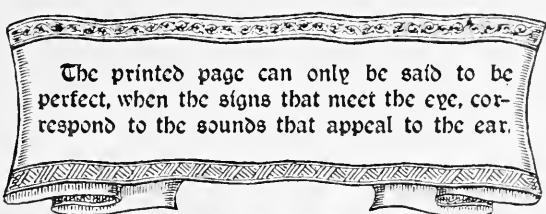
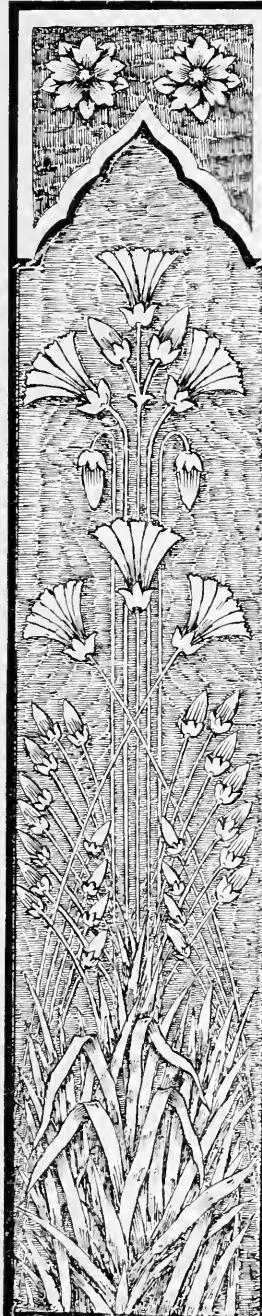
So profound is the ignorance that generally prevails, respecting our language,—spoken, written, and printed,—its nature, its beneficent uses, its vast capabilities and ultimate destiny, and more especially as to the defects of its present representation, that no wonder many otherwise intelligent people question the prudence and good sense of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, in giving one hundred thousand dollars in furtherance of an investigation of the matter, with a view to a Reform of existing methods. Those who have given most attention to this question know that it is one which vitally concerns the nineteen million children and youth who are to day receiving instruction in our public, parochial, and private schools: that it is a question of "education or no education" for tens of thousands of our American youth; that it is a question of saving, or wasting, at least two years in the educational life of every English speaking child; that it is a question on which mainly rests the Americanizing of the tens of thousands of foreigners who are yearly landing on our shores; that it is a question of the privilege of possessing the finest language of any European tongue, and the disgrace of tolerating the very worst spelling; that it is a matter which will help if adopted, and hinder if rejected, in the progress of the four hundred millions of Chinese and Japan-



The *Encyclopædia Britannica* cites as the dictum of philologists, that a true alphabet of a language, must contain Letters, corresponding to the number of its elementary Sounds.

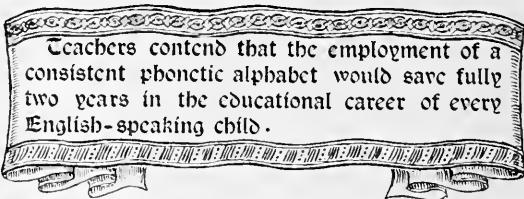
ese, whose advancement to day is handicapt by their semi-barbarous ideographic method of writing and printing; that it is a matter of vital importance in all missionary efforts, to advance those who are still in the rear in human development; that it is a question involving the suppression or development of the reasoning and moral faculties of every child who is taught to read, in that instead of finding letters and words subject to law and order, the child's reason and sense of right have to give place to the dictum of the teacher, whose instructions of to-day are contradictions of what he taught yesterday, to be again contradicted by the instructions of to-morrow; that it is a question involving the ultimate riddance of an anomaly the existence of which often subjects even men of culture to humiliation, because they can not remember the way in which a word is spelled, not having the time or inclination to master all of the two hundred and fifty thousand orthographic variants, which an eminent authority declares to be the result of ignorance or chance; and finally, it is a question whose solution offers the sole remedy for diminishing dialects, false pronunciations and slovenly enunciation of our language, and bringing about a more correct, better-modulated and more pleasing utterance of our native tongue.

Mr. Carnegie's convictions on this subject,

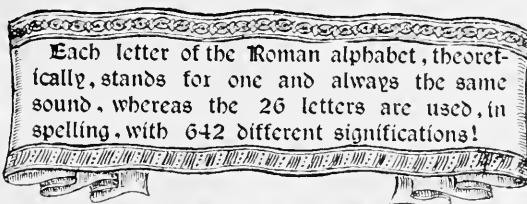
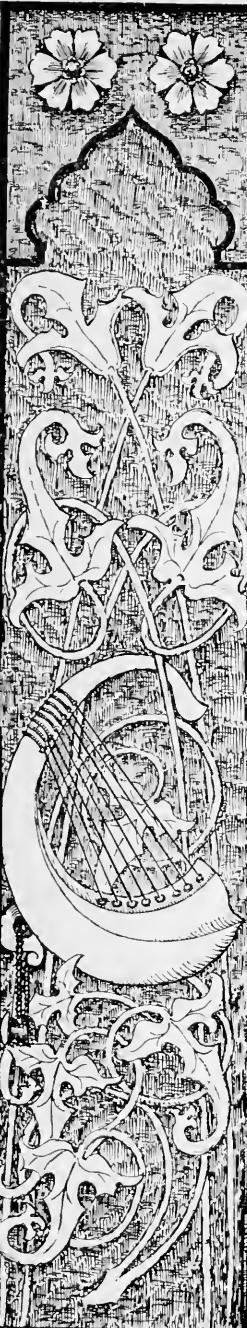


and the generous action he has taken, will tend to bring the subject of alphabetic reform more prominently before the thinking portion of the American people, and help them to realize the beneficial and far-reaching advantages, individual and national, that would result from a simple and scientific method of representing speech;—a consummation most earnestly desired by the teachers of the land, and as earnestly hoped for, by the wise and practical Franklin, whose convictions of the desirability and necessity of an alphabetic reform were summed up in the positive assurance that, sooner or later, “it must” be brought about.

The use of letters is to represent the sounds of speech, just as figures are employed to represent numerical values. People realize the necessity of assigning to figures a fixed and definite value; that each figure must represent one and always the same value, and if it were proposed, say, for the sake of saving its cost, to dispense with the figure 8, and to represent the value of that numeral by other figures, such as 1-7, 2-6, 3-5, 4-4, 7-1, 6-2, or 5-3, and that some special one of these combinations should be employed, according as it preceded, or followed, certain other figures, the proposition would, seemingly, be so absurd as to be undeserving of a moment’s thought. Yet this is exactly what we do with letters!



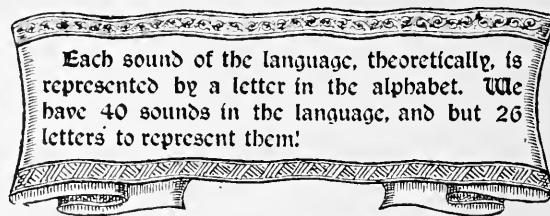
We teach a child that a certain letter, o, has the sound of owe, but when the child begins to read or spell words containing that sound, it finds that instead of uniformly spelling the sound owe with the letter o, it has to use oe if the word is doe; ow, if the word is low; oa, if the word is boat; ow, for know; but wo, for sword; ough, for though; eau, for beau; oo, for brooch; ew, for sew; but ewe, for sewed; ol, for yolk; owa, for towards; ot, for depot; og, for oglio; or o-e, as in bone; or oah, as in Pharoah! and as the child proceeds with its studies, it will find that modern custom has other odd and strange ways of representing this sound, as in Soane, Bordeaux, Knowles, Cockburn! If it were not a "fashion" to spell words in this way, it would seem incredible that such unreasoning confusion could be allowed to perplex and hinder children, in their very first efforts to "learn things." The puzzle begins with the first letter of the alphabet; its sound is as variously represented as o, and every other letter of the alphabet is subject to some unexplainable vagaries. If a child is taught that a stands for the sound in mating, what reason can be given for expecting it to spell and write this sound with ai, in gain; ei, in veil; ey, in they; ea, in great; eigh, in weigh; eigh, in weighed; ay, in play; aye, in played; ai-e, in pained; aigh, in straight; ao, in gaol; au, in gauging; au-e, in gauged; a-ue



Each letter of the Roman alphabet, theoretically, stands for one and always the same sound, whereas the 26 letters are used, in spelling, with 642 different significations!

in plague; e-e in there, ah, in dahlia; and aa in Aaron? Words like trait, when retaining its French pronunciation, and halfpenny, if allowed its English pronunciation, give other ways of spelling the sound of a. Practical teachers, some time ago, made the discovery that the spelling furnishes no key to the pronunciation of words; so the child is hurried to simple sentences. Take the following, for an example. "Does Tom wear his new shoes when he goes to town?" The more thoughtful the child, the more likely would it be to read what it sees on the printed page, and the result would be, Does Tom wear his new shuz when he guz to town? When corrected, the child might try another solution of the orthoepic enigma. If told that shoes spells shooz, it reads, Dooz Tom wear his new shoes when he gooz to town? But if goes is goze, why may not the child insist on reading the English of the book, which would be, Doze Tom wear his new shoze when he goes to town?

To the adult, whose twenty or forty years' experience may have made an absurd custom seem "natural," the child's unusual English may seem simply ridiculous, but there is a very sober side to this question, and our Plea will fail in its grave intent, if the perplexity and waste of time incidental to our customary spelling are not realized as a great im-



pediment in every child's early instruction. We have a smile of contempt for the Chinese, who can not see the absurdity of a pig-tail, or the deformity of a woman's club-foot, but do we not cling to a mere "fashion" in the use of letters that is almost as absurd?

The un-Alphabetic Representation of English.

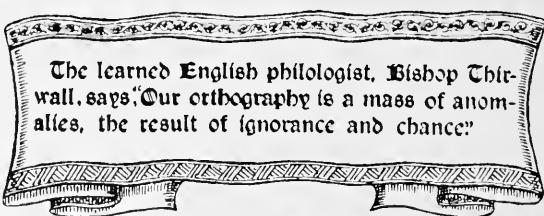
Our language claims to be alphabetically represented. Things and ideas are pictured to the eye by means of words, consisting of letters, that, professedly, represent their elementary sounds. The Chinese still use an Ideographic method of writing and printing. Their complex signs are, to a great extent, abbreviated outlines of ancient pictures, and each sign stands for a thought, a thing, or a name. Each sign, therefore, has to be separately learned, and a new thought or thing, added to the language, necessitates the invention of a new sign for its representation. The superiority of the alphabetic method is apparent, in that new words, new thoughts, inventions or names, may be added to the language without increasing the complexity of its representation. Electricity, and its varied uses, are said to have added four thousand new words to the language, without adding a single new letter to the alphabet.

It is only in theory, however, that our language can be said to be Alphabetic, the strict



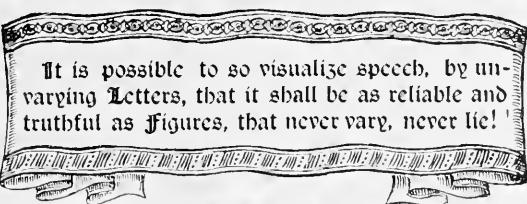
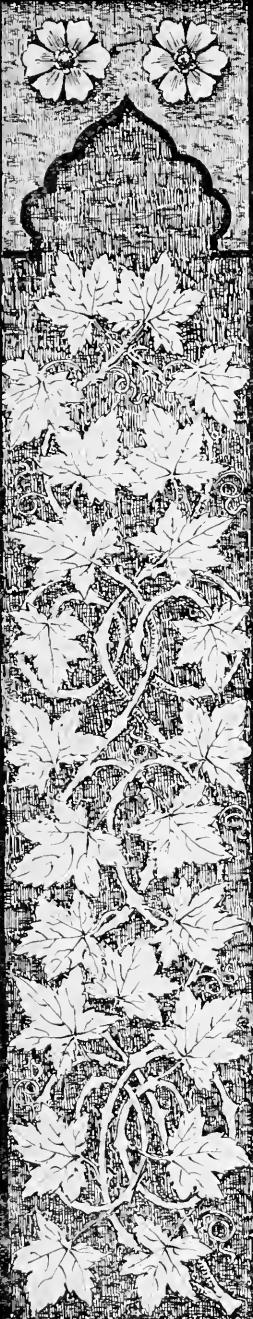
The spelling of Shakespeare's day differed widely from ours, but Dr. A. J. Ellis shows that it accorded with the speech of the period nearer than our spelling does to our speech.

meaning of which is, that each elementary sound of speech is represented by an appropriate sign, which is never used for any other than its own particular sound,—in the same way that figures are used, where a given numeral stands for one and always the same number. But such is the force of habit, that the eye, accustomed for years to scan the printed page, fails to realize how widely most words contradict the alphabetic theory. A few words, like so, no, me, mild, bold, etc. are alphabetically represented, but there are only about one hundred such words in the language; all the rest are spelled in one way and pronounced in another; while other words, of frequent occurrence, are represented by letters not one of which is heard in the spoken word! Words like is, as, of, eyes, they, shoes, shew, cough, etc., must seem uninteresting puzzles to the child when the teacher pronounces them! The child thinks and the phonographer knows that i-s, spells ice, and a-s, spells ace, while e-y-e-s, spells something that only the necromancer could pronounce! A word that appeals to the eye, if correctly represented, reaches the mind as directly as the same word, if spoken, appeals to the mind through the ear. Intelligent teachers condemn methods of instruction that encourage arbitrary memorising on the part of the young, when a rigid exercise of the reasoning faculty ought

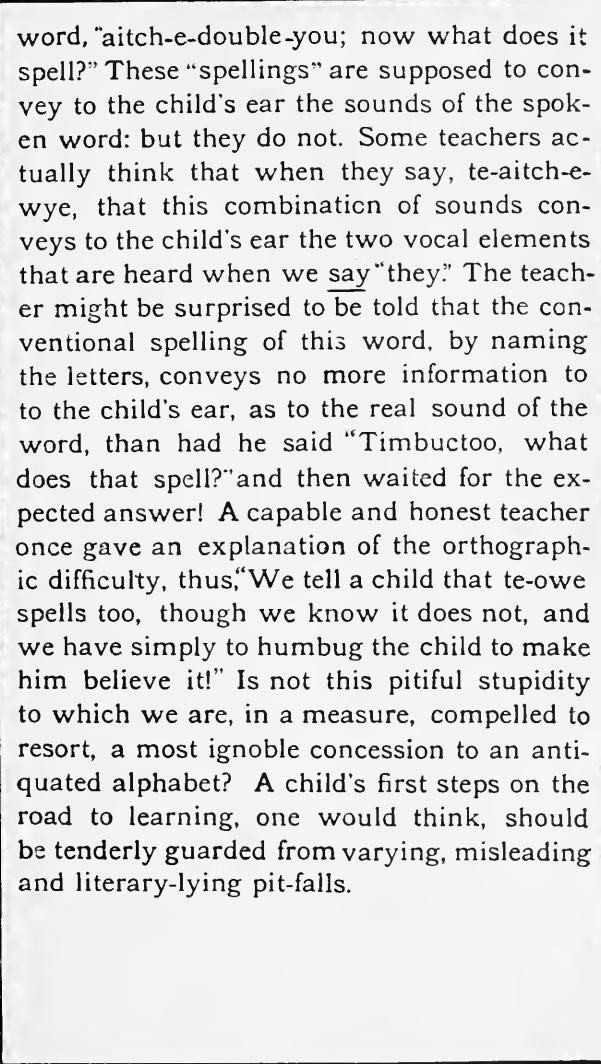


The learned English philologist, Bishop Thirlwall, says, "Our orthography is a mass of anomalies, the result of ignorance and chance."

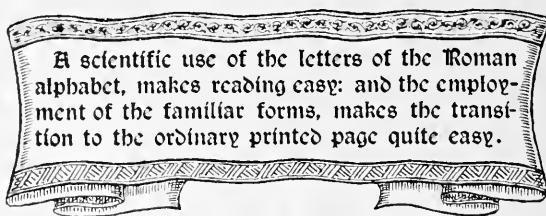
to be insisted on. But what is the conscientious teacher to do with our present lawless representation of thought, as it appears on the printed page? The child under his charge "must" learn to read. It is the most elementary, the most necessary, the most important art it will ever have to acquire. It is the key to all knowledge. The teacher "must" teach, and the child "must" learn how speech is pictured to the eye. The average reader may think the task is an easy one. The thoughtful reader will know that an easy and truthful representation of spoken language has never yet been attained, though six thousand years may have been spent in the effort. It is the riddle of the ages, and to-day, the unhappy instructor of the young, has to solve the problem, how twenty-six letters can be made to consistently represent the forty sounds of our daily speech! If the teacher begins in orthodox fashion, teaching the alphabet with the historical names of the letters, he will speedily arrive at simple words. Now word-building, with a scientific alphabet, is as easy as speaking. But not so as things are. The teacher says, "double-you-e," what does that spell?" The child is unable to answer. The teacher tries another word; "te-atch-e-wye," "what does that spell?" The sounds that reach the child's ear suggest no word, and therefore it is mute. The teacher tries another



It is possible to so visualize speech, by unvarying Letters, that it shall be as reliable and truthful as Figures, that never vary, never lie!

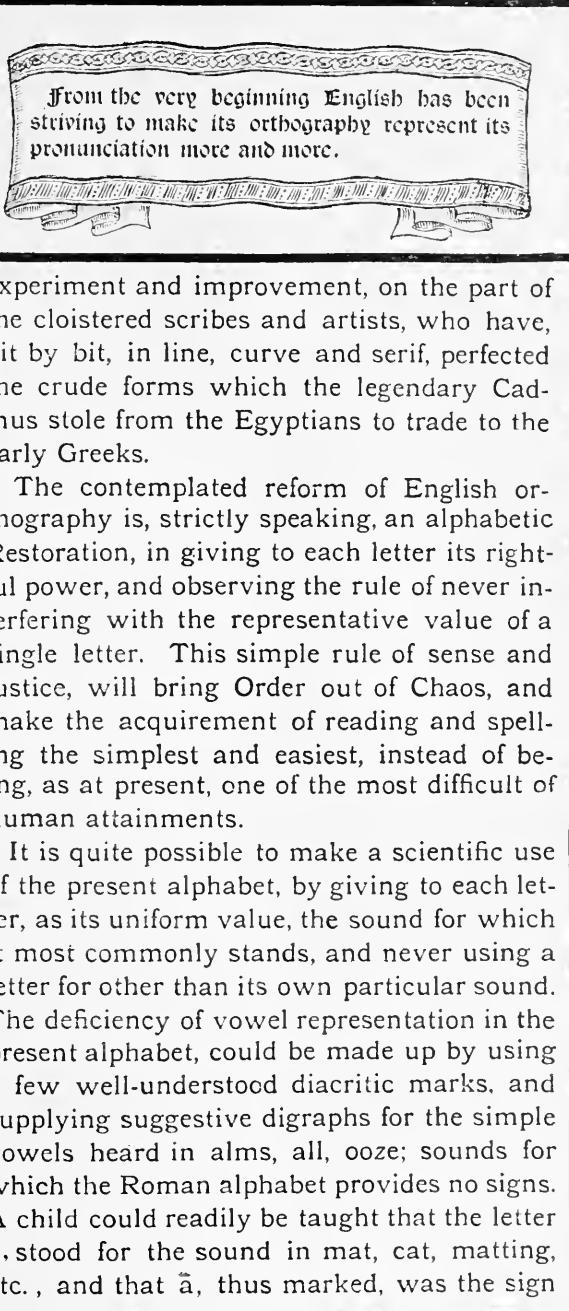


word, "atch-e-double-you; now what does it spell?" These "spellings" are supposed to convey to the child's ear the sounds of the spoken word: but they do not. Some teachers actually think that when they say, te-atch-e-wye, that this combination of sounds conveys to the child's ear the two vocal elements that are heard when we say "they." The teacher might be surprised to be told that the conventional spelling of this word, by naming the letters, conveys no more information to the child's ear, as to the real sound of the word, than had he said "Timbuctoo, what does that spell?" and then waited for the expected answer! A capable and honest teacher once gave an explanation of the orthographic difficulty, thus, "We tell a child that te-owe spells too, though we know it does not, and we have simply to humbug the child to make him believe it!" Is not this pitiful stupidity to which we are, in a measure, compelled to resort, a most ignoble concession to an antiquated alphabet? A child's first steps on the road to learning, one would think, should be tenderly guarded from varying, misleading and literary-lying pit-falls.



A Scientific Alphabet based on the Roman Letters.

Is it not possible to make Letters as truthful and reliable as Figures? Is it not possible and entirely reasonable, to say, that a given Letter shall always stand for a given Sound, and that a given sound shall always be represented by one and the same sign? This is Alphabetic Reform, and is all that is needed to remove one of the most formidable hindrances to human progress. To accomplish this great work, we have, first, to find what are the elements of our daily speech; then we have to find the most suitable signs for their uniform representation. What signs or letters, are best adapted to become pictures of sounds? Fortunately, this question has been settled by two thousand years of use, on the part of the leading races on earth. For distinctness, symmetry and beauty, there is no alphabet of signs that can be compared with the Roman forms. Only by trying to invent new letters on Romanic lines, can one rightly appreciate the difficulty, the seeming impossibility, of adding new letters to the present alphabet, that shall accord with the distinct and simple beauty of the Roman forms. And no wonder, when we have, in every printing office, ready for scientific use, to-day, the evolutionary results of three thousand years of



From the very beginning English has been striving to make its orthography represent its pronunciation more and more.

experiment and improvement, on the part of the cloistered scribes and artists, who have, bit by bit, in line, curve and serif, perfected the crude forms which the legendary Cadmus stole from the Egyptians to trade to the early Greeks.

The contemplated reform of English orthography is, strictly speaking, an alphabetic Restoration, in giving to each letter its rightful power, and observing the rule of never interfering with the representative value of a single letter. This simple rule of sense and justice, will bring Order out of Chaos, and make the acquirement of reading and spelling the simplest and easiest, instead of being, as at present, one of the most difficult of human attainments.

It is quite possible to make a scientific use of the present alphabet, by giving to each letter, as its uniform value, the sound for which it most commonly stands, and never using a letter for other than its own particular sound. The deficiency of vowel representation in the present alphabet, could be made up by using a few well-understood diacritic marks, and supplying suggestive digraphs for the simple vowels heard in alms, all, ooze; sounds for which the Roman alphabet provides no signs. A child could readily be taught that the letter a, stood for the sound in mat, cat, matting, etc., and that á, thus marked, was the sign

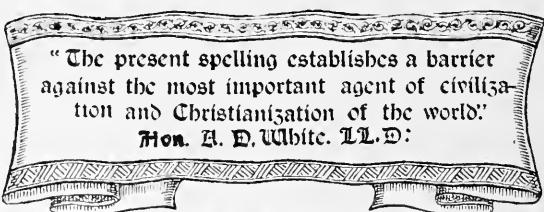
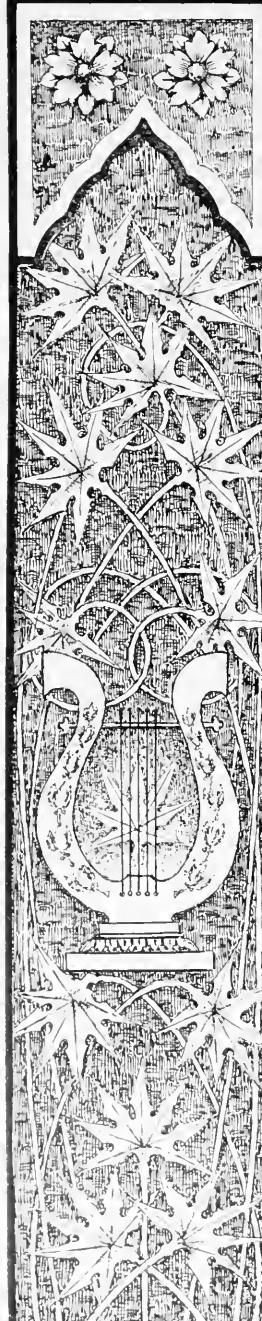
Letters

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and truthful

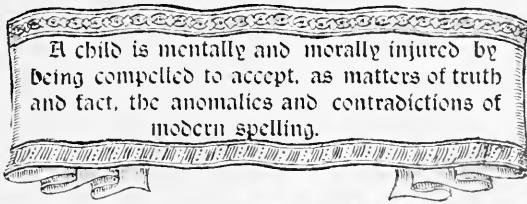
as figures.



for the sound in māte, māting, dāting, etc. ; and that o, stood for the sound in not, cot, etc. , while ō, represented the sound in pōst, cōld, etc. The thousand and one contradictions of the present spelling, would thus not be forced upon the child at its very earliest start in school-life. By the common-sense, unvarying use of letters, we should mete out only the measure of justice to the very young child, that we accord to older students in the use of arithmetical, algebraic, chemical, and musical signs, all of which are certain and unvarying in their use and meaning. A true alphabet, on the theory here suggested, which provided for all the forty sounds of English speech, would put the child in possession of the Key to the correct pronunciation of every word in the language.

Alphabetic Restoration.

As an educational necessity, no scheme, however scientific, no alphabetic reform, tho professedly complete, is worthy of consideration, that does not lead to a recognition and speedy use of the existing literature. A hundred years' experimenting have been needed to bring spelling reformers to accept this self-evident verity, and to admit that the world-wide-accepted, tho imperfect Roman alphabet, contains the elements of its own evolutionary regeneration. And how self-evident



A child is mentally and morally injured by being compelled to accept, as matters of truth and fact, the anomalies and contradictions of modern spelling.

are the steps to be taken! The Roman alphabet contains signs for five vowels, and instead of giving them eighty-four different significations, as we do at present, suppose we use these vowel signs for their most usual powers. thus,

a e i o u

as in mat, met, mit, not, nut.

When the vowels are long, let them be diacritically marked, thus,

ā ē ī ō ū

as in ale, eel, isle, old, pure.

For the three long vowels heard in English speech, but for which no signs are provided, let them be represented by the suggestive digraphs, thus,

aa au oo

as in alms, all, ooze.

The ū. in put, pull, etc., as distinct from the u, in but, mud, is marked by the breve, thus, pūt, pūll, etc.

When digraphs are used to represent simple sounds, they are introduced thus,

āā āū ōō

They should, of course, be pronounced by the teacher as simple sounds, and must never reach the child's ear as double-a, double-o.

The four diphthongal glides in speech are,

ī oi ow ū

as in ice, oil, owl, pure.

English

has the most

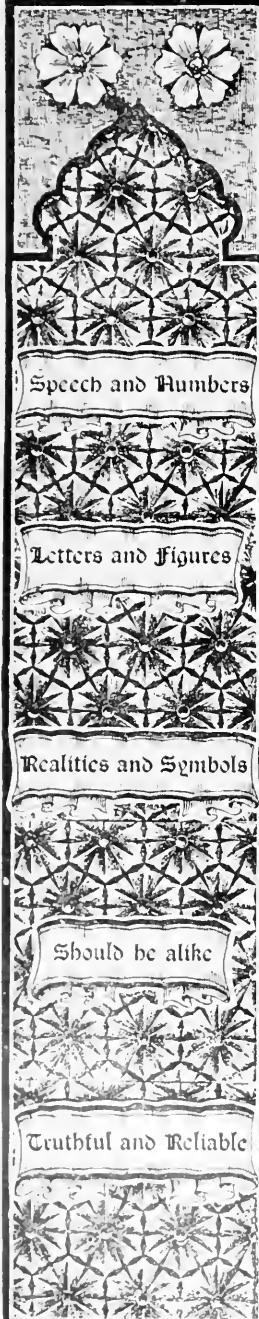
logical Grammat

and the

worst Orthograph

of any

European tongue



If the word scissors were spelled by the letters used for the same sounds in other words, it would make 81,997,920 justifiable ways in which the word might be spelled.

The glides *i* and *ü*, are, for theoretical as well as practical reasons, best represented by single letters. The diphthong heard in eye, time, my, etc., is variously pronounced by different branches of the English-speaking race. It is heard as a glide, from, approximately, the vowel positions, indicated by

a-i uh-i e-i au-i
ask, it; earth, it; ell, it; on, it.

"Ai," as in "taim," (time) of the Standard Dictionary, is as unsatisfactory as Sir Isaac Pitman's "teim" (time) "mei" (my) etc. Till unity of pronunciation is attained, the representation of this diphthong by a single letter, will generally be deemed most satisfactory.

The coalescents *w* and *y*, will retain their initial power.

The aspirate, or breathing, *h*, differs from all other elements of speech, in that it has no definite sound of its own, but is heard as an audible expiration, through the position of the vowel or coalescent it precedes; hence, the aspirate in heel, hall, hoot, wheel, hew, is as unlike as are the sounds *é*, *au*, *oo*, *w*, *y*; the aspirate, tho initial, is not heard till after the mouth is in position to pronounce the vowel or coalescent that follows it.

All the consonants of the Roman alphabet, except *k*, *q*. and *x*, (which are duplicates of other letters,) are used to represent the sounds for which they are most frequently used.

Summary of the additional signs for a
Complete English Alphabet.

The Simple Vowels, when Long,
are diacritically marked thus,

à è ì ò ù
as in fading feding liting nötting tüning

The present Vowel signs, unmarked, will
represent their brief and most usual powers;

a e i o u
as in mat, met, mit, not, nut.

The brief u, in put, took, will be marked ü,
thus, püt, tüt, püll, büll, etc.

The three Simple, Long Vowels,-that are
now without letters,-as heard in alms, tall,
ooze, are represented by digraphs, thus,

aa au oo
as in paam, faathur, Saul, faul, room, toom

The two Diphthongal Glides, heard in boil,
and bound, are uniformly represented thus,

oi ow

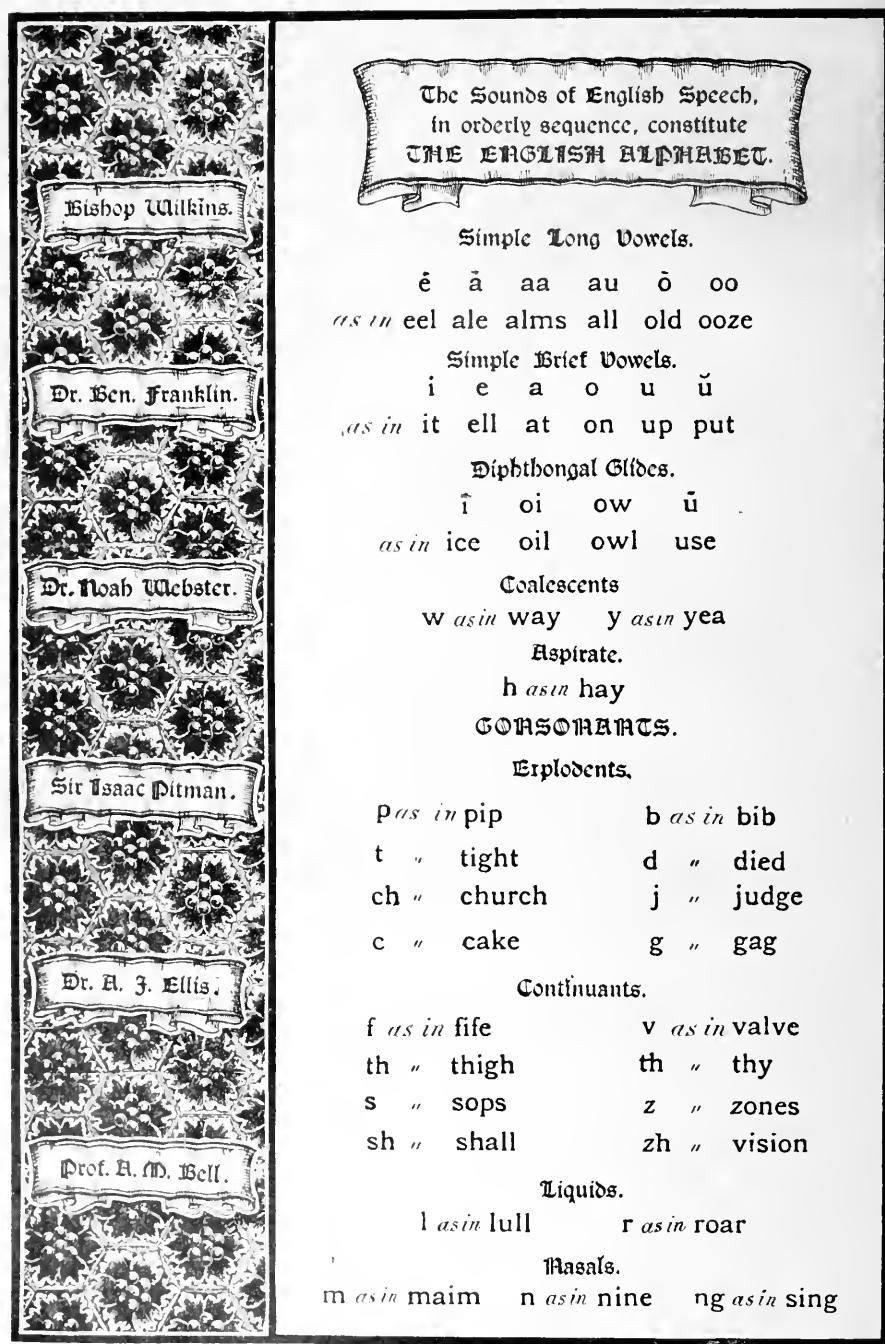
as in toil, boi, roial; cow, town, lowd.

The Coalescing Vowels, w, and y,
as in well, yell, etc.

will retain their present, usual powers.

The Aspirate, h, will uniformly precede its
following vowel, thus, hé, héll, hwél, hwil.

The Simple Consonant sounds, heard in
chin, thin, thine, rush, rouge, sing,
will continue to be represented by digraphs,
ch th th sh zh ng
thus chin, thin, thin, rush, roozh, sing.
j,(vocal ch.) as in jay; g,(vocal k.) as in gay.
Other Consonants have their usual powers.



The Sounds of English Speech,
in orderly sequence, constitute
THE ENGLISH ALPHABET.

Bishop Wilkins.

Dr. Ben. Franklin.

Dr. Noah Webster.

Sir Isaac Pitman.

Dr. A. J. Ellis.

Prof. A. M. Bell.

Simple Long Vowels.

é á aa au ó oo
as in eel ale alms all old ooze

Simple Brief Vowels.

i e a o u ü
as in it ell at on up put

Diphthongal Glides.

í oi ów ü
as in ice oil owl use

Coalescents

w *as in* way y *as in* yea

Aspirate.

h *as in* hay

CONSONANTS.

Explodents.

p <i>as in</i> pip	b <i>as in</i> bib
t " tight	d " died
ch " church	j " judge
c " cake	g " gag

Continuants.

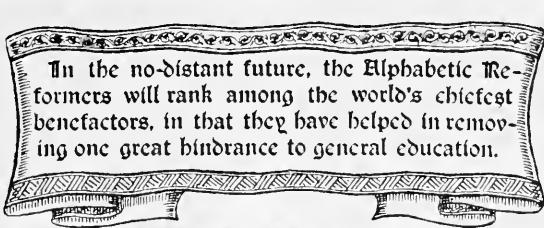
f <i>as in</i> fife	v <i>as in</i> valve
th " thigh	th " thy
s " sops	z " zones
sh " shall	zh " vision

Liquids.

l *as in* lull r *as in* roar

Masals.

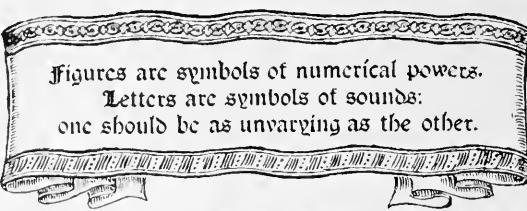
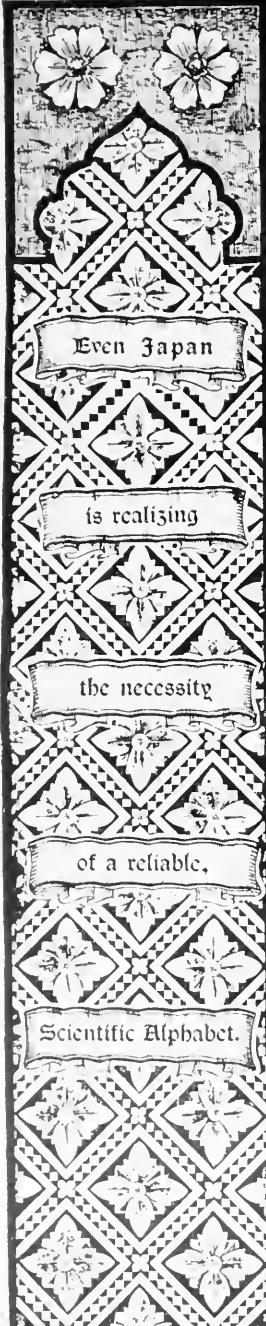
m *as in* maim n *as in* nine ng *as in* sing



No one can successfully teach English—and reading is but speaking from a book,—without some knowledge of the simple phenomena by which expired breath becomes intelligible speech. Breathing consists of inhaling air, then expiring it, from the lungs, as breath; but the terms breath and breathing, as applied to speech, refer only to expired breath.

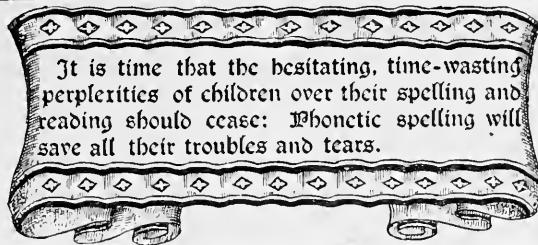
A person in health will breathe inaudibly, whether breath passes through the mouth or nose. With a little effort, however, breath can be made audible, as when we breathe on a frosted window, when the passage of the air through the mouth is heard as a whisper. When we thus breathe, the muscles of the mouth are relaxed; the open passage of the mouth assumes no definite position; but if we attempt to pronounce a simple vowel, say é, immediately the mouth does assume a definite position; the muscles of the tongue becoming somewhat rigid. It will thus be evident that the quality of the sound produced, is due to the shape of the aperture through which the expired breath is forced. This is still more evident if all the simple long vowels are distinctly whispered, say, each one three times, é, à, áa, áu, ó, oo; it will then be clearly perceived, that to the more or less open cavity of the mouth, and to the position of the tongue, are due the peculiar quality of the resulting sound. Whispered elements,





however, constitute but one phase of human speech; its chief characteristic is its vocalization. If the former experiment be repeated, of audibly breathing through a relaxed position of the mouth, and now, instead of simply breathing, suppose a slight groan, grunt, or, with closed lips, a moan is made, a distinct vocal murmur is heard, due to the vibration of the vocal cords, as the breath passes them in its passage from the lungs to the mouth. It is the vibration of these delicate ligaments, that are attached to the edges of the glottis, the opening at the top of the windpipe, that gives speech its vocal resonance; that prolongs a spoken sound, till it becomes song; that enables us to speak, to sing, to shout, to groan, scream or moan, with a wide range of pitch, softness, or violence.

No part of man's physical organism presents a greater marvel, than do these diminutive ligaments; not more than seven-eighths of an inch in length, yet giving the human voice a range of rarely less than three octaves, that can not be imitated, in pitch, by any human ingenuity, with vibratory strings, that are less than from ten to forty times the length of the human cords; that can not be imitated for sweetness and purity of tone by any instrument of human construction: nor has man ever made an instrument of such marvelous carrying power, like the soprano



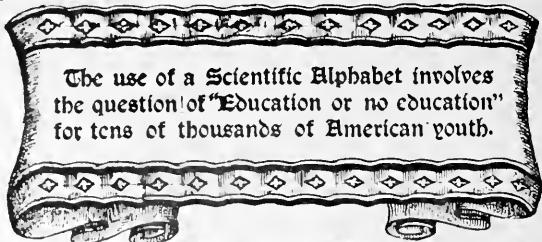
It is time that the hesitating, time-wasting perplexities of children over their spelling and reading should cease: Phonetic spelling will save all their troubles and tears.

tones of a good singer, that will soar above the din of a great orchestra and the thunders of the peeling organ. While the vocal cords are the prime factors, in producing speech and song, they would be of little avail, were they not reinforced by the sounding chambers of the mouth, the pharynx, and the passages of the nose.

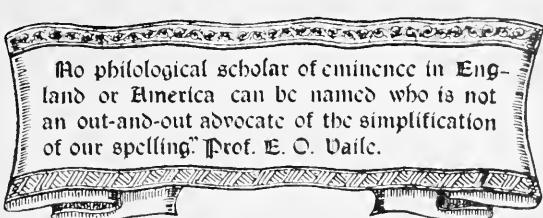
Clicks and clucks,-man's speech to horses,- which form a material portion of the speech of the Hottentot, are due to inspired air, the sound being produced by the sudden withdrawal of the tip, or side of the tongue, from the teeth or palate, as air is inspired. Kisses are clucks of the lips. The speech of all civilized races consists of expired breath.

It will be clear from what has been said, that it is only when breath vibrates the vocal cords, as it passes them, that breath becomes Sound; and it is only when vocalized breath passes through, and is manipulated by the mouth, that it becomes articulate Speech. Animals have Voice, frequently of amazing power, but very limited range; man alone is gifted with a voice, capable of musical modulation, and the most precise and varied articulation.

If vocalized breath is allowed to pass thru the mouth when in a relaxed position, it appeals to the ear as an indefinite sound, a simple gutteral murmur; it is indeed a soft, in-



cipient grunt. It is only when the mouth, including in this term all the laryngal muscles, assumes a definite, and somewhat rigid position, that it can produce a definite vowel, as, è, àu, ôo; when, however, the mouth is in a relaxed position, the vocal sound heard is known as the "neutral vowel," the "obscure vowel," and sometimes it is called by phoneticians, the "vocal murmur." The symbol for this sound, is, ü. Special reference is called to this vocal, because its constant use is the bane of English speech. It is the sound we hear in the French word, le; it is the initial sound heard in the words earth, early, urn. It is the vocal heard in the unaccented syllable of such words, as, again', afraid', mature'; which are pronounced ugain', ufraid', myture'. When our dictionaries mark certain vowels as "obscure," it is this sound that is usually heard in the pronunciation of the word in question. The misuse of this vocal murmur is the characteristic feature of careless and slovenly speech. The teacher's attention sh'd be especially alert, to prevent the habitual use of this murmur, in place of the definite and proper vowel, in some of the most frequently recurring words of the language. It is the habit of careless speakers to use the obscure vowel in all the following words; of, to, as, it, is, or, and, for, but, can, shall, etc. The phrase, "do as you like" becomes, doouz



you like; "this or that," is heard as thisur that; "this will do" reaches the ear as, thisul do; "I can wait," becomes Icun wait; and "do it again," is reduced to doot^z ugain! These are examples of a colloquial vice, which proper training, with a phonetic alphabet, can alone rectify, and in place of speech that is an offence to the cultivated ear, we may, in the near future, hear English generally spoken with pleasing intonation, and with such accuracy of articulation and pronunciation that it will be a charm to listen to it. Careless speech, -which is the habit of speaking with the least possible exertion of the vocal muscles-, is an offence to the trained ear, as the lounging, lazy habit of the idler is to the civilized eye. It is easier to say now-un then, than now-an then; but there is no question that we should be able, distinctly and easily, to say, now and then. It is easier to say ob-jict than object, sub-jict than subject; but no one doubts that the correct word can, with a little practise, be made the accepted habit. It is the brief vowels of our language that are subjected to most frequent perversions, for these are the very sounds that demand a discriminating ear, and flexible vocal muscles, to avoid doing them injustice. The long open vowels and diphthongs, as a rule, take care of themselves. Careless speakers use the obscure vowel in the unaccented syllable



A perfect Alphabet, that would make reading and spelling easy acquirements, would aid intellectual and moral progress, more than any other reform that could be named.

of all words like those in the following table; careful speakers avoid using it in any case, and will make a scrupulous distinction between the different vowels of the respective groups.

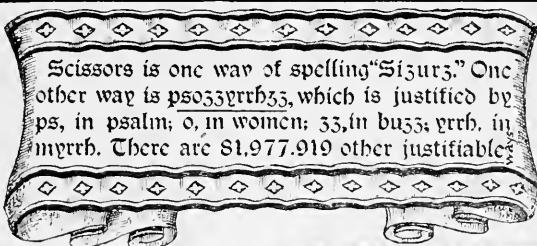
i e a o

victim	vowel	vocal	victor
council	counsel	social	senator
pencil	novel	petal	actor
peril	vessel	mental	mentor
margin	silence	fragrant	anchor

The above are examples of a class of words terminating with an "open syllable," that is, a syllable having a medial or a final vowel. Another class of words terminate with a "closed syllable," where a final l, or m, in the final unaccented syllable, is pronounced with its full power, without any preceding vowel; thus, allowing the single articulation to form the whole of the "closed syllable."

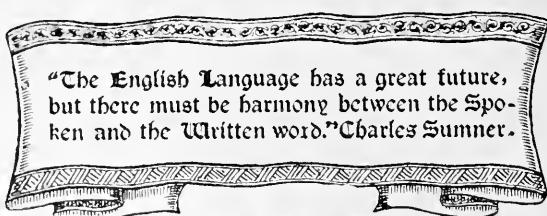
sample	sounded	samp'l	rhythm	sounded	rith'm
rattle	"	rat'l	chasm	"	caz'm
stubble	"	stub'l	schism	"	siz'm

A single sound, or a combination of sounds, if pronounced with a single vocal impulse, constitute a syllable. Some orthoepists include in the above class of words, those terminating with n, as stolen, lighten, strengthen, which the Century, Standard, and International Dictionaries give stol'n, light'n, op'n



strength'n. A precise, phonetic representation of these words,—a spelling that would represent deliberate utterance,—would seem to require the retention of the preceding vowel, e. otherwise there would be no difference in the spelling of the words light-ning and light-en-ing, and strength-en-ing would be reduced to strength-ning.

The proper enunciation of the brief vowels is as important to the singer as to the speaker. A prevailing fault, even among singers who have received special vocal training, is that they rarely pronounce the brief vowels with any degree of accuracy; but substitute for each and all, the vocal murmur, u. The long vowels, in English words, can be sung as clearly and sweetly, as when they occur in Italian words, but the more frequently occurring brief vowels in English, present a difficulty which care and training will alone overcome. That the vocal murmur is commonly used in speech and song, in place of the proper vowel, will be questioned only by those who confound u, with u, as in but, up, son, etc. or with ü, in put, look, etc. Each of the vowels in these words requires a definite and somewhat rigid position of the mouth, for its utterance; but u,—it may be well to repeat,—is the symbol of the neutral vocal, the sound that is produced when the muscles of the mouth are in a relaxed and lazy attitude;



when, therefore, any definite sound could not possibly be produced.

The Consonants of English Speech.

The articulations of English speech, called Consonants, are explosions or emissions of breath or voice, due to actual contact of the vocal organs; or to modified, mouth obstruction. Unlike the vowels, which are unobstructed, resonant, song-like Sounds, the articulations might be called noises, seeing that p, is but a puff; s, a hiss; z, a buzz; f, one of many fricatives; r, a trill; and m, and n, but nasal murmurs, or moans. The symbol p, represents a Position of the lips, rather than a Sound, for it has no existence till the lips are separated to allow of the utterance of the vowel that follows it, as in pay, paw, etc. If the word rope, be deliberately pronounced, and the lips allowed to remain closed for an instant, there is silence instead of sound, and it is only when the lips are separated with a puff, that the articulation p, is heard. If the word rope, be again pronounced, and while the lips are closed, if an effort be made to vocalize the final puff, p, the word robe will be the result. This experiment illustrates the fact that b, is but a vocalized p; as p, is but a whispered b. In like manner a hiss, symbolized by s, is an emission of breath, which being obstructed by the tongue, against the

From Benn Pitman, Greeting.



HIS PLEA will probably reach some who have never seriously considered how great a hindrance to general education and advancing civilization is the imperfect Alphabet yet used for the representation of the English language. The practical Franklin said "English is the gateway to all knowledge." Why then should we make it difficult for all, and impossible for some to enter this gateway? We unquestionably do this by trying to make twenty-three letters represent the forty sounds of English speech. (K, q, and x, are but duplicates of other letters.) The attempt to do so results in a lawless orthography, which gives 615 different ways of spelling our forty sounds, while the twenty-six letters of the alphabet are used with not less than 642 different significations.

Can we longer treat with unconcern the dictum of practical educators, who say that our anomalous orthography wastes two years of every child's educational life, in its attempt to master the arts of reading and spelling? The economic side of this orthographic enigma is not to be overlooked by a practical people. If it costs two dollars a week to feed and clothe the average American child, and if two years are wasted by each of the nineteen million children who attend school, it means that this nation loses more than five million dollars a day by the use of its antiquated alphabet and grotesque spelling.

From the beginning of recorded history the representation of thought, by picturing spoken words, has been regarded as a necessary factor of civilization; but the problem has presented a duplex difficulty; first to find what are the elementary *Sounds* of speech, then to find appropriate *Signs* for their representation. After six thousand years of experimenting, we have, to-day, a satisfactory, if not a complete, representation of language, adapted to modern civilization; first a brief, phonographic system of shorthand, secondly, a script, or phonetic longhand, third, a phonotypic scheme of printing. It is with the latter, the most important, we are here concerned. Thanks to the efforts and investigations of the past half century, we know enough of what are the elements of speech to correctly picture them to the eye. As to the Signs for typic representation, there is no question that the Roman Letters are the clearest and most symmetrical forms ever used by any people to represent the sounds of language. Numberless and costly experiments have shown that we can not add a single letter to the Roman

23
alphabet without admitting signs that spot the page by their ugliness. Fortunately we do not need to do this. By the simple expedient of dispensing with the *dot* on the *i* and *j*, and using this sign for the "macron" mark, to indicate the long vowels, this, together with the use of a few well-understood digraphs, such as *ch*, *th*, *sh*, etc., and using the remaining letters with their most usual powers, we make a rational, easily acquired, and strictly phonetic alphabet, which, when once learned, is an unfailing key to the correct reading and spelling of every word in the language. It makes an alphabet that is a delight to the child, a boon to the foreigner, while to the philosopher and the phonetician, it seems to be the solution of a problem that has taxed the ingenuity of some of the wisest men for scores of centuries.

An essential feature of any scheme of typic representation that is to stand a chance of general acceptance is, that it shall be a safe and easy stepping-stone to an acquaintance with the existing literature. The improvement offered in our Plea certainly answers to this test more completely than any scheme ever before presented, as it shows words almost exactly like those on the Romanic page, save that they are shorn of all useless and misleading letters, while those that meet the eye have an unvarying meaning.

I do not wish my Plea to go forth on its mission without its being known that it was never intended as a book to sell. It was prepared as a message to my phonetic, artistic, and social friends, and for Mr. Carnegie's special consideration, in the hope that he would regard it as containing instruction and argument that must precede a general acceptance of Alphabetic Reform. Of course I should be only too willing to donate the plates of the booklet and relinquish all rights in them. There were matters connected with speech and its representation that seemed to me had never been presented as fairly and plainly as they might be, and I thought that the abounding reasons for a more consistent representation of our language, if placed before our friends would, more than ever, induce them to help by their pen and means to free the children of the English-speaking race from the time-and-tempor-wasting tyranny of our conventional spelling. To this end I bought type, and learned the trick of setting and distributing it. I made the illustrations, (which have a meaning apart from their decorative effect*) and did the printing—eight lines at one time—by means of a

The decorative features of this Plea illustrate our theory that the *Stem* and the *Leaf* form the basis of all true Decoration, that is not literal, historic, or symbolic. The Leaf in its further development becomes bract, tendril, bud, blossom, berry and fruit, all of which are included in decorative designs. Another theory we taught during our twenty years' instruction at the Cincinnati Art Academy was that the Fine Arts, hitherto imperfectly classified, consisted of *Language*, the fine formation of thought in words; *Oratory*, the fine vocal delivery of words; *Music*, or tone expression of emotion; *Musical Rendition*, by voice or instrument; *Sculpture*, realization of thought or incident in form; *Painting*, delineation on surface; *Construction*; *Decoration*; *Fine human Conduct*. For these and other Art teachings John Ruskin wrote "I am grateful to you." B. P.

planer and a paper folder, at my own home. The page thus prepared was photographed to half its size and etched on a zinc plate by the photo-engravers. It was necessary that I should do my own type-setting that I might diacritically mark the vowels, to give them their definite meaning. The text of the Plea, and especially the scrolled headings, to each page will furnish arguments for alphabetic reform, of which I trust my friends will avail themselves in preparing short articles for the press. If they desire an extra copy of the Plea for loaning, or for presentation to some teacher, it will be but fair if they send an equivalent of their labor for mine, in the shape of twenty-five cents worth of coin or stamps.

There is a decided awakening, especially on the part of teachers, in favor of alphabetic reform, but we need not look for books to be prepared till a demand for them is created. That is the work of to-day. It may be a hundred years before the London Times and the New York Herald will favor a rational spelling. That need not concern us; but with earnest and intelligent propagandism we may greatly shorten the time. The work of to-day is the dissemination of correct ideas of language representation, and in that work every earnest phonetician should assist by his voice, his pen and his [example; to wit: let him write

program	prolog	tho	thorofare
catalog	demagog	altho	thru
decalog	pedagog	thoro	thruout

He will find himself in goodly company, in doing this, for a host of leading scholars, presidents of universities, learned scientists, professors, and celebrities of literary standing have pledged themselves to drive home this narrow wedge of consistency. If you consent to help in this measure of phonetic reform, pray write to Dr. Charles P. G. Scott, Yonkers, N. Y. (one of the editors of the Century Dictionary), and he will gladly send you explanatory papers that may make you willing and anxious to "sign the pledge." Then strengthen your convictions of what ought to be done by mastering the phonetic long-hand alphabet, and while your use of it may, at first, somewhat puzzle your friends, the telling of the truth—on paper—will be to phonographers and non-phonographers a new delight and an abiding satisfaction.

Phoneticians, as a rule, are so firmly grounded in the belief as to the sufficiency and completeness of an English alphabet of just forty sounds, that we feel a reluctance in intimating that two additional ones are fairly entitled to recognition in a professedly complete English alphabet. The first is the so-called neutral vowel, heard in the French article *le*, and in the English words (1) *earth, firm, serve, birth*, (2) *further, purchase, burn, surmount*. American phoneticians write all these words with the same vowel, namely the *u* in *but*. English phoneticians write the first words with the *e* in *met*, and the latter with the *u* in *but*. Both practises are unsatisfactory, for neither is right. The letter needed to correctly express these words represents the neutral vocal, fully explained in our Plea. Americans and English

pronounce these words alike. The Scotch, only, give the *e* (met) sound in such words as *earth*, *earn*, etc. If the neutral vowel were recognized it would unify the representations of this class of words.

The second sound which seems to demand recognition in a complete alphabet, is a medial *a*, as heard in *half*, *cart*, *far*, *shaft*, etc. The sound that good usage favors in these words is longer and more open than the vowel in *hat*, *sat*, etc., and briefer, and less open, than the vowel in *ahms*, *father*. English phoneticians write these words with the brief *a*: Americans, as a rule, write them with the long vowel. The medial vowel seems to be needed for their correct expression.

These, perhaps, are matters to be thought about, rather than discussed at the present time, but we should be much pleased to receive the views of our friends as to whether we have or have not, with respect to the best use of the *dot*, solved,—as some practical printers have said,—the last phonotypic difficulty in a rational representation of the English language.

Farewell.

Sept. 15, 1905.

We lately delivered a lecture in the Amphitheater at Chautauqua, N. Y., on Alphabetic Reform. The day after the following resolution was unanimously passed :

WHEREAS, The English language is at present written with an alphabet that does not provide for a full and correct representation of the sounds of speech, and consequently the spelling of words presents perplexing and time-wasting difficulties which every child encounters in its first educational efforts; and

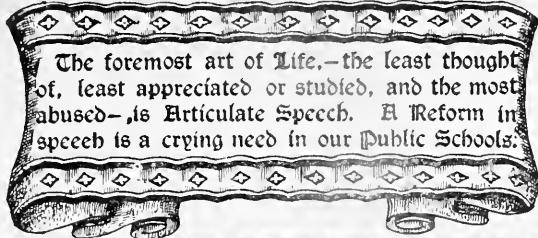
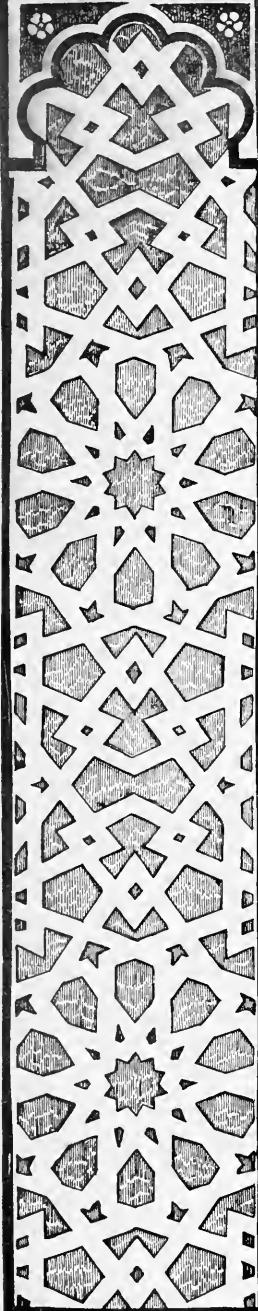
WHEREAS, The forms of letters in general use are wholly satisfactory; and

WHEREAS, A strictly phonetic and rational scheme of representing speech is possible, by an improved marking of the vowels, wherein a simple dot, removed from the letters *i* and *j*, is employed for diacritically marking the long vowels of the language, that being the only variation from the conventional printing now in use; and

WHEREAS, By consequence an acquaintance with the new and correct method leads to the easy reading of the ordinary printed literature, therefore

Resolved, That we heartily recommend the trial of this phonetic scheme in elementary books for the young.

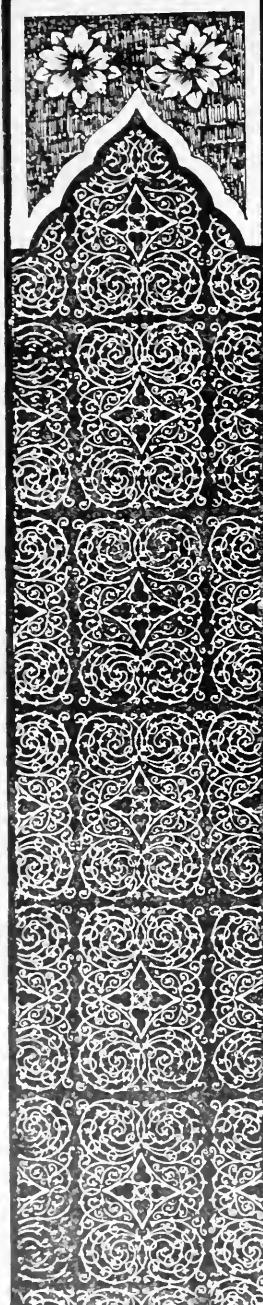




The foremost art of Life,—the least thought of, least appreciated or studied, and the most abused,—is Articulate Speech. A Reform in speech is a crying need in our Public Schools.

lower gum and teeth, results in a hiss; but if the breath, thus obstructed, be vocalized, it becomes a buzz, whose symbol is *z*. Thus the Explodents *p*, *t*, *ch*, *c*, gutteral, are the whispered or breath sounds of *b*, *d*, *j*, *g*; as these sounds are the Vocalized utterances of the former Whispered sounds. A group of articulations, differing from the explodents, in that their sounds may be continued as long as the breath lasts, and hence are called Continuants, are *f*, *th*, *s*, *sh*. These signs represent the whispered utterances of *v*, *th*, (*as in thy*), *z*, *zh*. The 16 articulations thus far named, are the only ones that occur in English speech as pairs: the remaining consonants, *l*, *r*, *m*, *n*, *ng*, are all vocals.

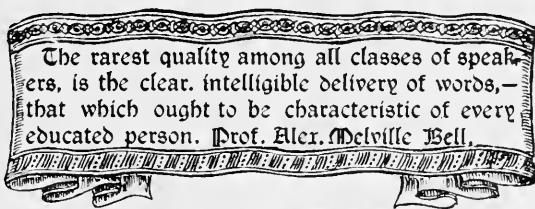
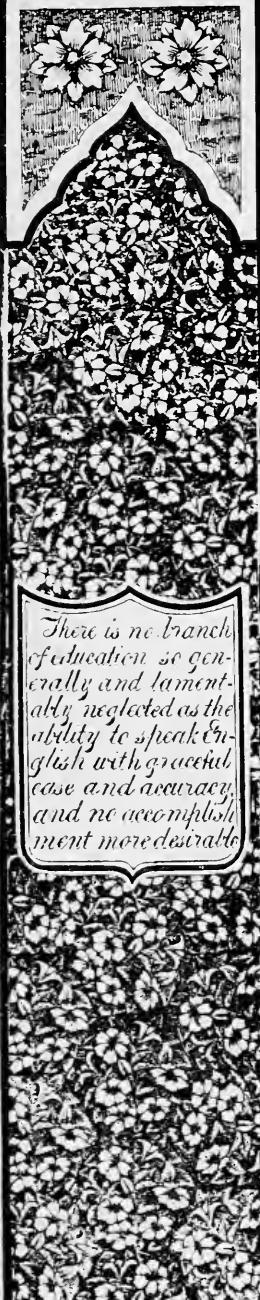
If the proposed Alphabetic Reform had no other educational value, than to direct attention to the elementary sounds of our native tongue, with a view to their study and practise, as they are employed in words, so as to attain ease and accuracy in their use, it certainly would be a matter of special interest to every advocate of intellectual progress. It is a fact, to be noted with regret, that Speech is the one study most generally neglected. It is supposed to come "by nature," but it does not. Speech, to be correct, easy, and agreeable, comes—as does good singing—only with study and patient drill. It would be well if people recognized the fact, that correct and



The awakening of Asia is a momentous fact. Commerce, and the English Language, will be the great factors of progress; hence the necessity for its logical, visual Representation.

pleasant speech, and still more, an effective utterance of words, is to be regarded as an art, like singing; and all know that skill in singing, comes only from long-continued, intelligent practise. The vocal organ is a divinely-constructed, mechanical instrument, and a knowledge of its capacity, and the efficient management of its resources, are only attained on the conditions that attend the mastery of any human instrument. Articulate speech has hitherto been regarded, mainly as a means of communication with our fellow creatures, and the prevalence of high-pitch, monotonous, nasal and querulous tones among women, and metallic, un-modulated, and un-musical tones among men; adding to this, the careless and slovenly articulation usually heard from both sexes, have led to the general belief, that the prevailing speech was the utterance of normal English, whereas those who have made a study of phonetic drill, know that it should be regarded as an ear-torturing perversion of our noble tongue, for which our Public Schools should be held responsible. The infinite possibilities of the vocal art, as an esthetic delight, giving pleasure to ourselves as well as to others, seem to have been unthought of!

Speech, as a fine art, must satisfy the emotional as well as the intellectual feelings of a cultured hearer. To be instructive as well as



pleasing, it must, in no way, give offense. It must satisfy the Emotional feelings, by having respect for each of the following essentials

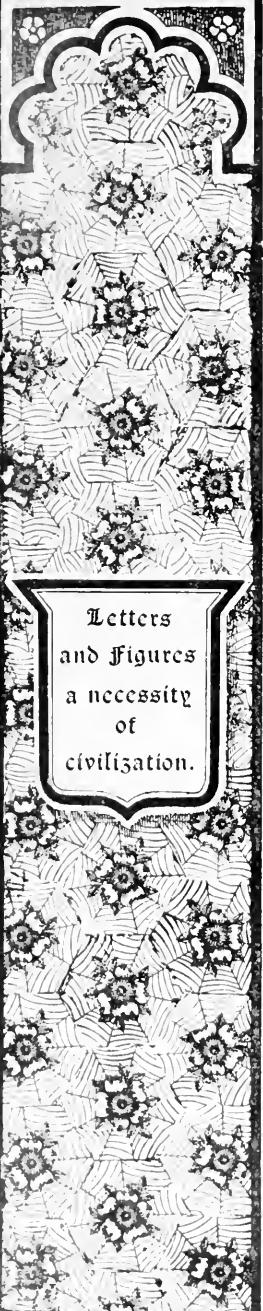
It must have a

Satisfactory quality of Tone,	
The right	Pitch,
A pleasing	Modulation,
The correct	Time,
The appropriate	Force.

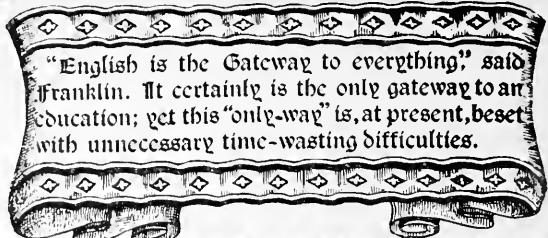
To satisfy the intellectual feeling, speech must have

Precise and clear	Articulation,
Traditionally-correct	Pronunciation.

That which is to be Sung, must also be Said; but only those who have acquired the ability to read English correctly, will be able to effectively sing it. The whispered consonants present a special difficulty to the singer. They can not possibly be Sung, for you can not give sonority to a whisper: we can sing only Sounds. The terminal whispers in such words, as life, hope, etc., or still more puzzling, words terminating with double and treble whispers, like lifts, shafts, etc., these words contain breath articulations, that can only be articulated, and speaker and singer alike, will overcome the difficulty, and satisfy listeners, only by persistent and long continued practise.



Letters
and Figures
a necessity
of
civilization.



The audible syllabification of words, i. e giving a distinct, vocal impulse to each syllable, is essential to good speaking. It is as important to be observed in singing. To this end, a syllable should, wherever possible, begin with a consonant, and end with a vowel; for it is the vowel that opens the mouth and carries the sound: etymology, in this case, is subordinated to distinctness. We therefore say and sing,

bri-tur	not	brit-ur	grà-tur	not	grát-ur
mà-cur	"	màc-ur	lè-pìng	"	ièp-ìng
flé-ting	"	flèt-ìng	so-rò	"	sor-ò
fo-lò	"	fol-ò	me-zhur	"	mezh-ur

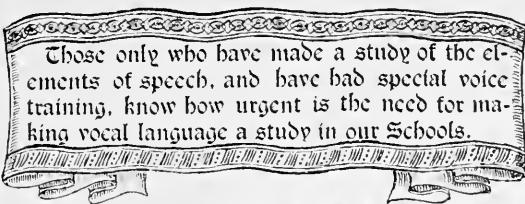
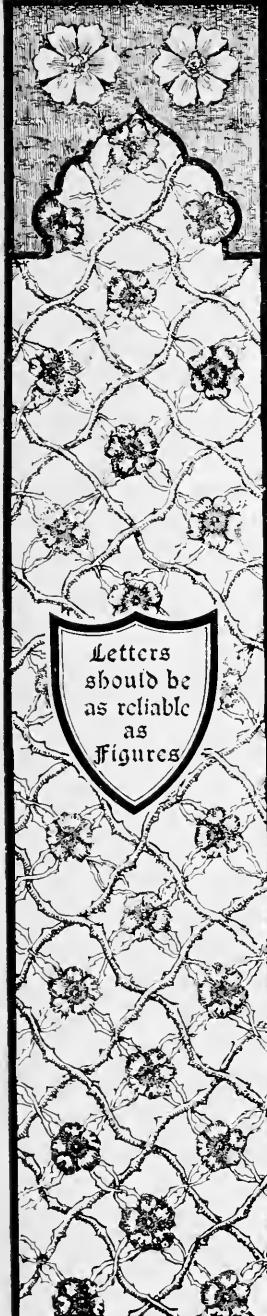
The only exception to this rule, is in syllables ending with ng, which never begins an English word or syllable, thus, we can only say or sing,

long-ing sing-ing bring-ing

When there are two consonants, one ending the first, and another begining the second syllable, both should, of course, be distinctly pronounced, thus,

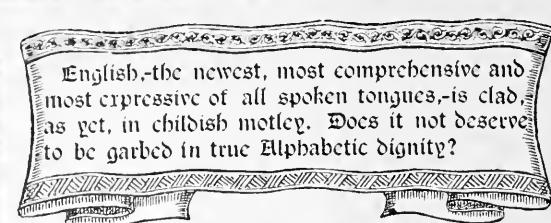
con-cu-r	man-shon	par-ter	end-les
èv-ning	stan-ding	nor-mal	mon-stur

There should, of course, be no actual rest or pause between the syllables, in the utterance of this class of words, such as here appeals to the eye, when they are syllabized by typic characters. The intent is to point



out the greater audibility of terminating a syllable with an open-mouth vowel, rather than with a more or less closed-mouth consonant, whispered or voiced.

Among the essentials of a modern education, such as is supposed to be provided for in our Public School scheme of instruction, we might reasonably conclude that speaking and reading one's native language, would be accorded a first place, from its prime importance. Humiliating, then, is the confession, that our children, after years of attendance at the Primary, Intermediate, and the High-Schools, leave them without even knowing what are the elementary sounds of their mother tongue; without having received any systematic vocal drill, worthy of the name, and without having acquired anything approaching that correct and pleasing habit of speech which is supposed to be the distinguishing mark of the educated. The habitual speech of our young people, as a rule, is characterized by a sing-song, indistinct, slovenly, and a more or less inaccurate utterance of words, that one might expect to hear, only from the illiterate. A reform in this essential of education, must begin with the recognition and use of a complete alphabet, and a rational spelling, which is the visible picturing of the spoken words, and to which the vocal organs will, instinctively, give an audible utterance,



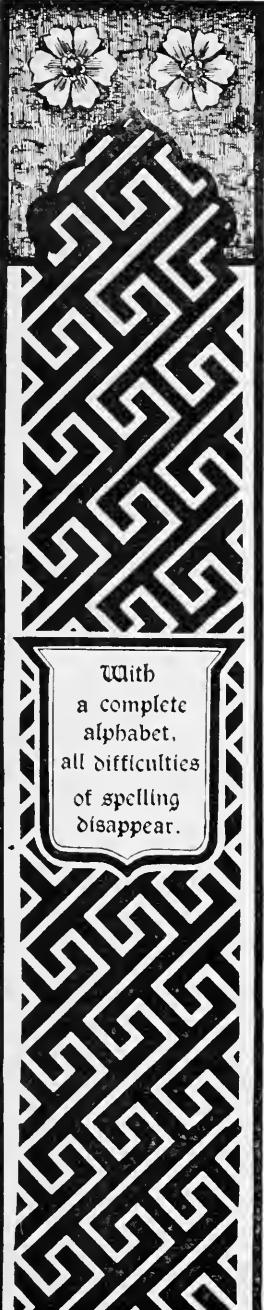
without even the suggestion of doubt or difficulty. Thus reading, when it is a vocal interpretation of unvarying and reliable signs, will be shorn of all its difficulties; and as the signs that meet the eye give the true pronunciation, more attention will be given to articulation, tone, pitch, inflection, syllabification and modulation, -all essentials to good reading and speaking, - which, if observed, make vocal utterance an art, instructive to the student and a pleasure to the listener.

The teacher who does not insist on the habit of properly syllabizing words, will be likely to hear from his pupils such vulgarisms as,

reg-lur for reg-ù-lar	lit-rul for lit-ur-al
in-trest "	in-tur-est
sep-rat "	sep-ur-at
sing glur "	sing-gù-lar
dif-runs "	dif-ur-ens
sal-ri "	sal-ar-i
purs-nul "	pur-sun al
vowlz "	vow-elz
nash-nul "	nash-on-al
pur-tic-lur	for par-tic-ù-lar

It has been urged that a strictly accurate and syllabized utterance of words, if taught to the young, might give them an affected and pedantic style of speech. So it might, if they always remained half-taught and inexpert; but the adult, who has been properly taught and trained, will speak correctly and without a tinge of affectation.

By way of comparison with the prevailing untutored, and therefore defective speech, it

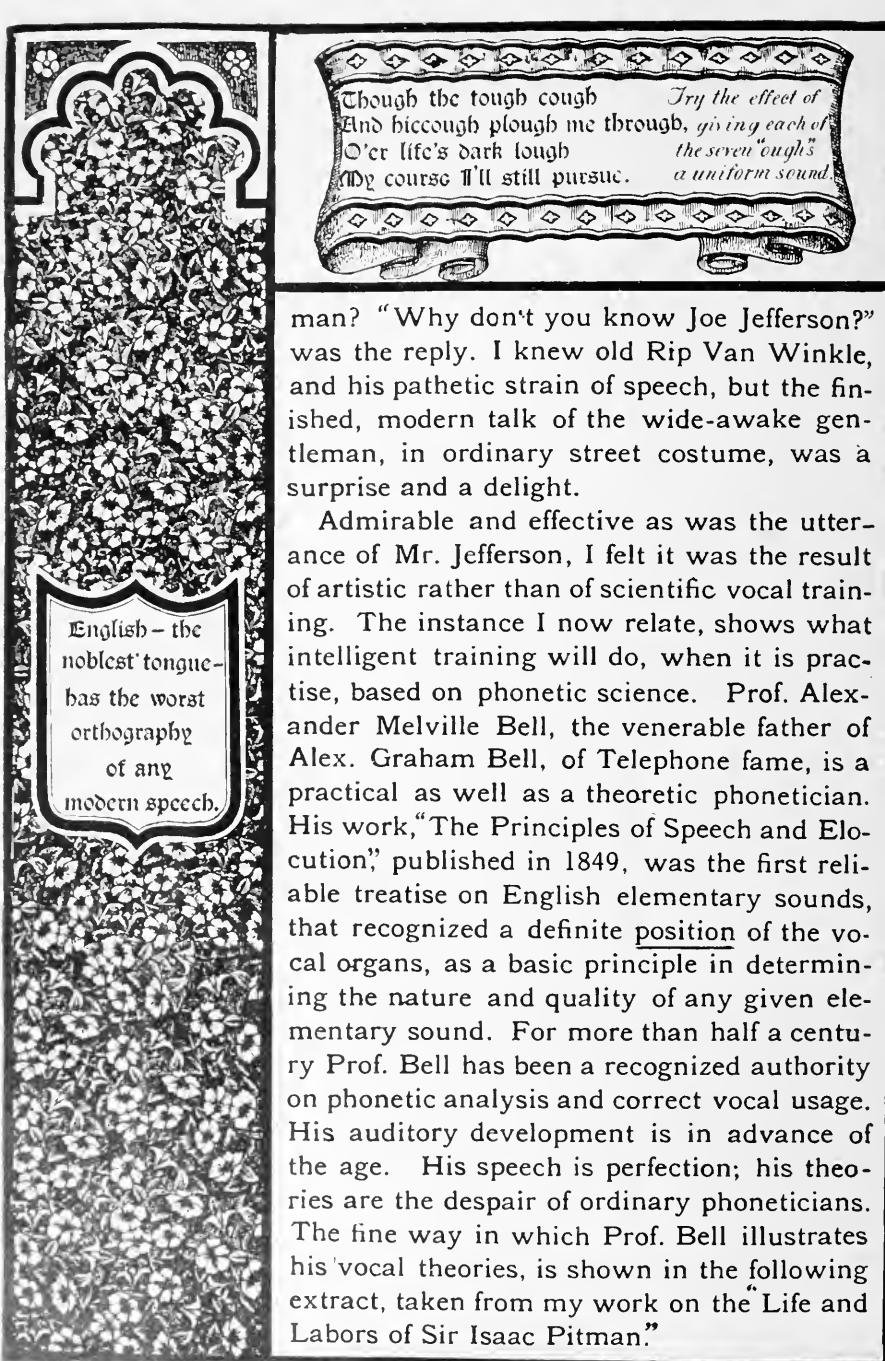


With
a complete
alphabet,
all difficulties
of spelling
disappear.

After six thousand years of experiment with the problem of Language representation, we at length know what are the sounds of speech and how to make a rational, complete Alphabet.

may be well to instance a case, where words "fitly spoken," was a charm that years have not effaced.

It must have been thirty years ago. T'was late in the evening, after theater hours; I had to leave some copy for the Cincinnati Commercial. Entering the editor's room, I found a group of gentlemen listening to the talk of one of their number, who, perched on the corner of the office table, was narrating some professional experiences in an amusing way. Mr. Halstead had turned round from his desk and was leaning back in his chair, enjoying the talk. I, too, became an interested listener, not so much for what was said, as for the unusual way in which the speaker said it. I was puzzled in deciding whether the speaker was an Englishman, or an American, for he did not betray the peculiarities of either nationality. His talk was free and easy, but in tone, pitch, modulation, accentuation and pronunciation, it plainly told it was the result of much intelligent training. It was an instance of good English, without the least suggestion of affectation or pedantry. Was he a great traveller, and had he made it his hobby to avoid the vocal peculiarities of every body else? After a quarter of an hour's chat, still talking, he slid from the table and sauntered into the street. Directly he left, I said to Mr. Halstead, Who is that gentle-

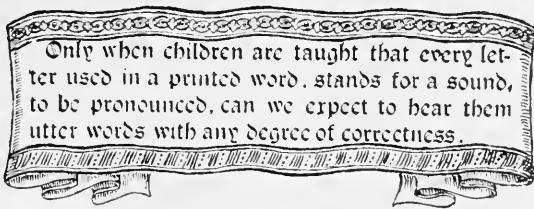


English - the noblest tongue -
has the worst orthography
of any
modern speech.

Though the tough cough
And hiccough plough me through, giving each of
O'er life's dark bough
My course I'll still pursue. Try the effect of
the seven "ough's"
a uniform sound.

man? "Why don't you know Joe Jefferson?" was the reply. I knew old Rip Van Winkle, and his pathetic strain of speech, but the finished, modern talk of the wide-awake gentleman, in ordinary street costume, was a surprise and a delight.

Admirable and effective as was the utterance of Mr. Jefferson, I felt it was the result of artistic rather than of scientific vocal training. The instance I now relate, shows what intelligent training will do, when it is practise, based on phonetic science. Prof. Alexander Melville Bell, the venerable father of Alex. Graham Bell, of Telephone fame, is a practical as well as a theoretic phonetician. His work, "The Principles of Speech and Elocution," published in 1849, was the first reliable treatise on English elementary sounds, that recognized a definite position of the vocal organs, as a basic principle in determining the nature and quality of any given elementary sound. For more than half a century Prof. Bell has been a recognized authority on phonetic analysis and correct vocal usage. His auditory development is in advance of the age. His speech is perfection; his theories are the despair of ordinary phoneticians. The fine way in which Prof. Bell illustrates his vocal theories, is shown in the following extract, taken from my work on the "Life and Labors of Sir Isaac Pitman."



"I retain a vivid remembrance of meeting Mr. Alex. Melville Bell, before leaving England. I was much struck with the purity and charm of his speech. It was a revelation to me. His utterance seemed to combine the easy, graceful intonation of the talk of a cultured actress, with the strength and resonance that should characterize the speech of a man, and though finely modulated, it was without a suggestion of affectation, either as to matter or manner. I had never before, and I do not know that I have since, heard English spoken with the ease and delicate precision that so distinctly marked the speech of Mr. Bell. His clean-cut articulation, his flexibility of voice, and finely modulated utterance of English, was an exemplification of what efficient and long-continued training of the vocal organs will do for human speech—and how charming the result!"

The marvelous expressiveness of spoken English, and its power to arouse the deepest feelings of our nature, were never, in my experience, more fully shown, than in an incident attending the delivery of a passage from the stately lines of Shakespeare. As in song, its full charm is heard only when the singer has richness of voice as well as unquestioned skill; and as Wagner had to invent new and more powerful instruments, to give expression to his new harmonies, so impressive or

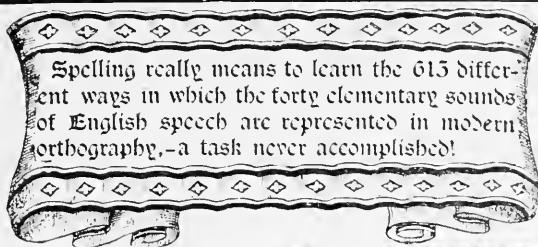


No art of civilization has presented more difficulties of scientific investigation, and no art has shown such slow development, as the Alphabetic visualizing of Speech.

solemn thought, demands exceptional vocal capacity, to do it full justice; for the emotions are awakened in the degree to which the auditory nerves are affected—all other requirements being in accord—by the full, rich and limpid quality of tone in which thought is delivered. Henry Clay must have possessed a voice of rare quality; "it was a voice" says Carl Schurz, "to the cadences of which it was a physical delight to listen." The most effective vocal utterances I ever heard, were those of the Shakespearian actor, Barry Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan possessed a commanding personage, a graceful bearing, a mimetic organization, and a voice sufficiently powerful, but of such musical modulation, that it conveyed subtleties and depths of meaning to words, that I had never heard from a speaker before. He was enacting the part of Hamlet, in this city, on his second visit to this country, some thirty years ago. The scene was the preparation for the fencing-bout, before the king and queen, and that ended so tragically. Hamlet, though conscious of his skill, is yet a prey to evil forebodings. He confesses to Horatio;

"Thou wouldest not think how ill all's here, about my heart: but 'tis no matter."

Horatio, in his loving solicitude for Hamlet, would have the fencing-bout put off, but Hamlet exclaims;

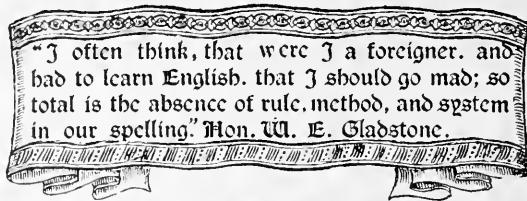


"Not a whit; we defy augury: there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come: if it be not to come, it will be now: if it be not now, yet it will come: *The Readiness is all!*"

This passage, which was uttered amid the breathless stillness of a crowded house, sent a thrill of emotion through the assembly, and when the final admonition was uttered, an audible sigh was the response from the vast audience: and no wonder, for the thought was uttered with a pathos and feeling I never heard equalled, and that gave a deep solemnity to our expressive tongue.

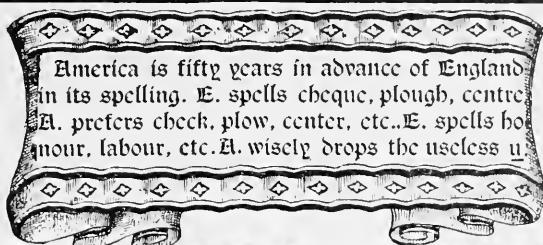
There is a legend of the elder Keene, the first great realistic tragedian, which teachers of English relate to their pupils, to stimulate them to persevering practise of vocal exercises, that on the day when he was to enact the part of Othello, he spent three hours, pacing his room, endeavoring to give the effect of the utmost abject, suffering despair, to the words, *Fool, fool, fool!* which Othello utters, on discovering the plot by which he has been deceived and led to the terrible crime of killing the innocent Desdemona.

There have been preachers, like Whitfield, Edward Irving, and the famed Chrysostom, who, without special training, but possessed of exceptional vocal powers, were able to ar-



ouse the deepest emotions of great masses of people, but in the case of Whitfield, it is said that the great preacher, in his youth, spent much time in dramatic training, in the hope of becoming an actor. This, however, does not lessen the force of the argument here insisted on, namely, that excellence in speech comes only from intelligent, vocal training, and that the correct and pleasing utterance of our native tongue was too important an art of daily life, to be longer neglected in our Public Schools.

Even the intelligent may be reminded that it is our privilege to speak an exceptional language, in that it is the newest, and, etymologically, the most cosmopolitan of modern tongues. It is a language wholly free from the harsh, unmusical vocals and "noises" characteristic of other northern tongues, and while it is so comprehensive, as to meet the most exacting intellectual requirements, its vocal range makes it nobly expressive, and capable,—when spoken by one who has mastered it,—of awakening the most varied emotions of the human heart. It is the language of the most progressive race on earth; it has the richest and most varied literature of any language, living or dead; and its vigor, wealth and fitness, are destined to make it,—in the no very-distant future,—the universal tongue of all civilized peoples.

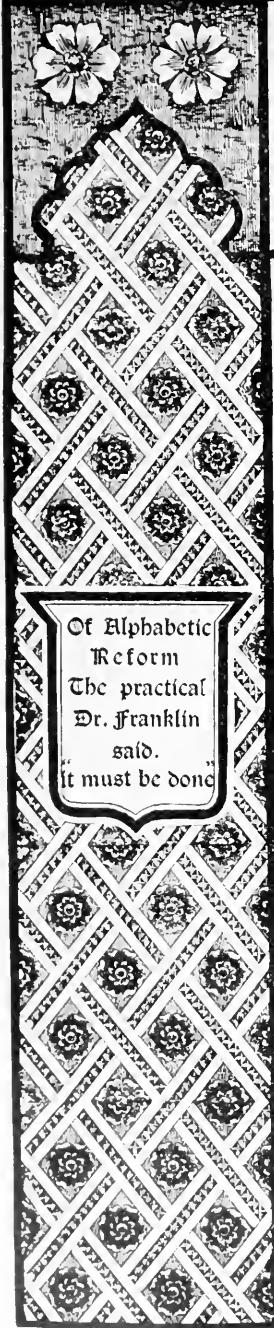


This is the glorious language which intelligent common-sense demands should be relieved of the motley garb that an inefficient alphabet provides, to be furnished with an appropriate, fitting, and reliable scheme of letters, that will make its visual representation a truthful picture of the admirable head and heart-expression it really is.

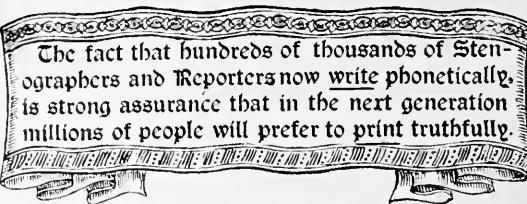
Historical Attempts at Phonetic Reform.

One of the most interesting and valuable contributions to Language literature that has appeared since Isaac Disraeli published his "Curiosities of [general] Literature", a century ago, is a series of articles that have been given in the "British and Colonial Printer", (London) by Mr. R. Burch. These articles have given a detailed and singularly impartial account of the manifold attempts which have been made by able statesmen, sapient philosophers, learned divines, and by scientific and unscientific enthusiasts, during the past three centuries and a half, to construct such a thought and speech-representation of English, as would be gladly accepted to take the place of the present lawless orthography.

These reformers were men of exceptional ability, who being convinced that our inefficient alphabet and contradictory spellings are grave hindrances to mental and moral progress, labored with amazing patience to de-



Of Alphabetic
Reform
The practical
Dr. Franklin
said.
it must be done

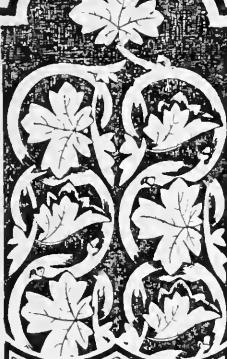
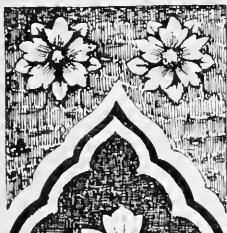


The fact that hundreds of thousands of Stenographers and Reporters now write phonetically, is strong assurance that in the next generation millions of people will prefer to print truthfully.

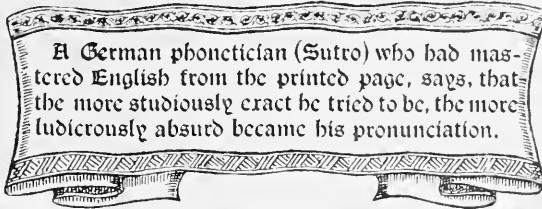
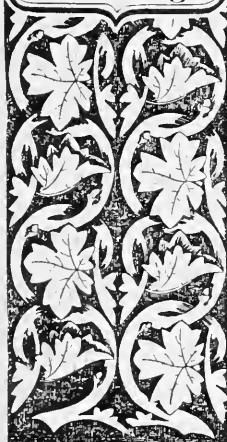
vise some new, true, scientific scheme. They failed to recognize that language and its alphabetic representation, are factors of evolutionary growth; as much so, as is the shape of our houses, or the cut of our dress. They can be Improved; they can not be radically Changed. To offer new and hybrid letters to represent familiar sounds, is like asking orientals to build steep roofs to their houses, or for northerners to use flat ones. It needs but little intelligence to see the advantages that would result from making letters uniform in their values, so that any word, when seen for the first time, could be read as easily as any new combination of figures. Such words as caoutchouc, or kieslguhr, (one of the ingredients in dynamite,) when we first meet with them, make us pause, because every letter employed has varied powers; whereas any combination of figures, say, 46,581, causes no hesitation; a thousand persons seeing this number for the first time, would read it easily and read it alike. There is no reason why letters should not be equally reliable.

Fortunately, the familiar letters of the Alphabet can be used with fixed values, and every sound of the language can be represented by these familiar and wholly satisfactory letters.

The reader will be wise if he determines not to let another day pass without acquiring the ability to distinctly repeat the elementary

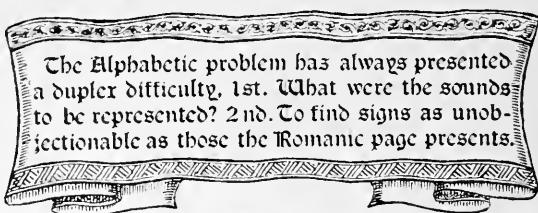
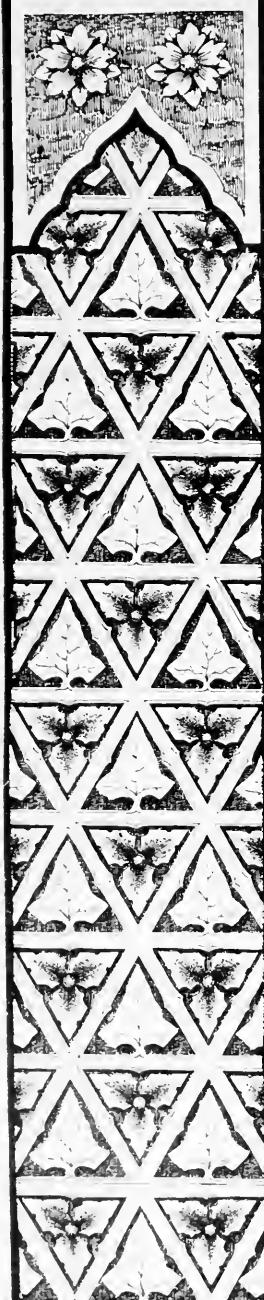


*Thought
Representation.
Six thousand years
of use;
Three Centuries
and a half
of Experiment.
The End not yet!*



sounds - not the misleading names - of the English Alphabet, as given on a preceding page. The difficulty of accurately pronouncing the brief vowels, and of making the whispered and vocalized distinction between the pairs of consonants, will disappear after a few trials, if the sounds of the key-words are carefully noted. The effort will develop a sensuous conviction that all these radical elements of the language should be represented by appropriate signs, and that a given sign should never be used for other than its own sound. Then will follow the conviction that such words as iz, ov, tho, etc. are far more reasonable and truthful, than is, of, though, etc. and very soon, the silly prejudice of the eye, -heretofore trained by a false custom,-will yield to reason, and the accurate picturing of words, will prove an abiding satisfaction to both eye and mind.

An intelligent, phonetically - trained community, will undoubtedly lead to more efficient language-training in the Public Schools, the time-wasting perplexities of the Spelling Book will no longer plague the young, better English will be heard in our homes and on the streets, and gradually, the printing-press will be influenced by the gentle persuasions of a phonetically-educated community, and will, in time, issue its mandates with not a single phonetic-lie upon the printed page.



The Alphabetic Problem Solved.

We had supposed that all possible modes of Phonetic representation had been considered, that all possible forms, available for typic use, had been tested, and everything done that human ingenuity could suggest, to make the phonetic representation of words, if not as satisfactory to the eye, as is the Romanic page, yet as unobjectionable as was possible with an extended alphabet. While we knew that the forms of the letters employed were the best, we were conscious that the reader's eye that had been trained by the perfect symmetry of the Roman letters, would be offended with the spotted appearance of the Phonetic page, due to the frequent recurrence of the "macron" sign, used to distinguish the long from the brief vowels; when, suddenly, it occurred to us, that by dispensing with the dot over the i and j, (a useless appendage, when these letters are used phonetically,) and employing this, the simplest of all forms, instead of the line macron, to distinguish the long vowels, the only objectionable feature of the phonetic page would be removed. A page of this Plea showed by actual count, that while the old style of indicating the i and j, gave forty dots, the accurate marking of the phonetic values of all the long vowels, gave but fifty.

Letters can be made
to be as reliable
and truthful as Figures

Scientific English Alphabet,
for Printing and Writing.

VOWELS

é	e as in eel	i	i as in it
á	a " ale	e	e "
áá	q " alms	a	u "
au	o " all	o	o "
ó	o " old	u	u "
oo	u " ooze	ú	u "
i	f as in ice	COALESCING VOWELS	
oi	oi " oil	w	w as in way
ow	ó " owl	y	y " yea
ú	u " use	h	h as in hay

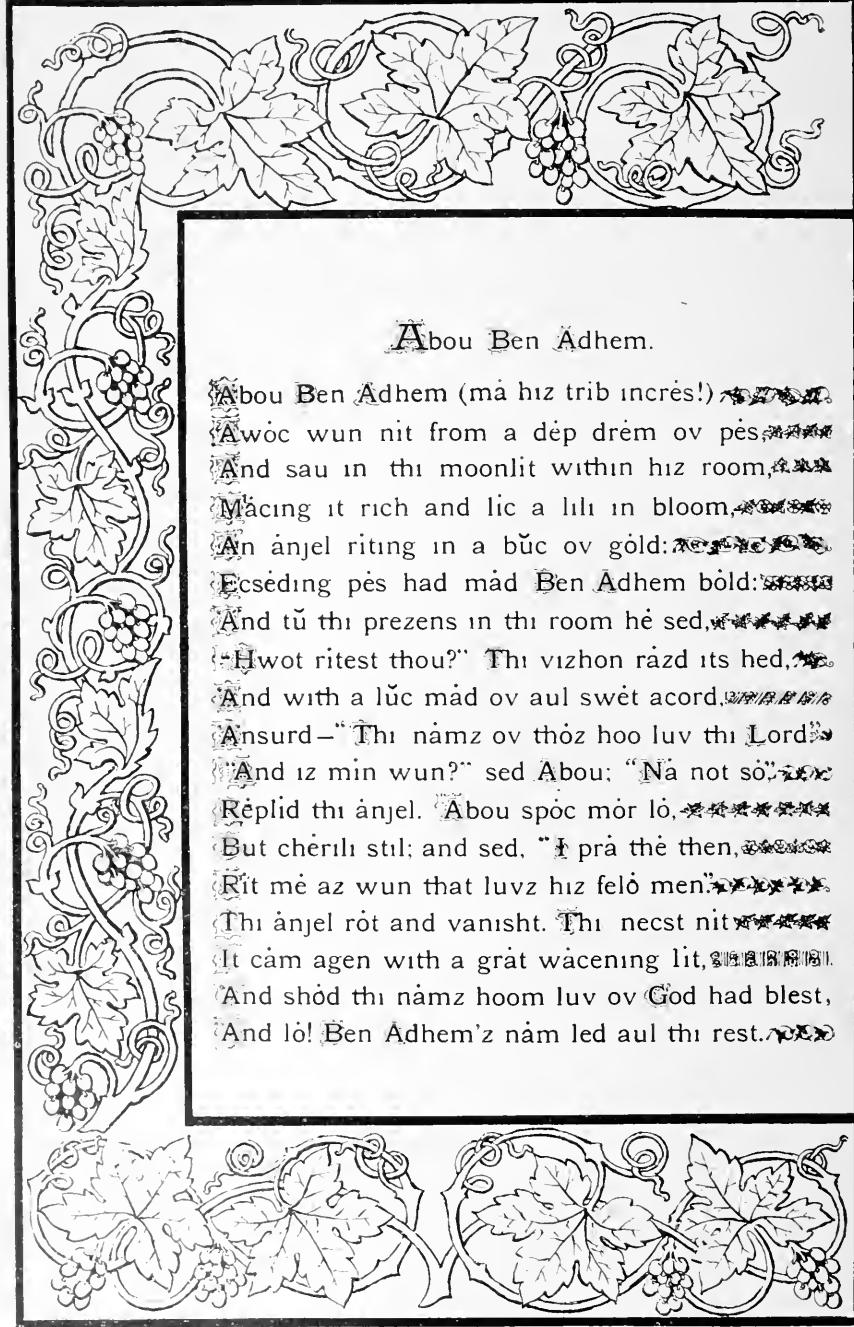
CONSONANTS

p	p as in pip	f	f as in five
b	b " bib	v	v " valve
t	t " tight	th	th " thigh
d	d " died	th	th " thy
ch	ch " church	s	s " sops
J	J " judge	z	z " zones
c	c " cake	sh	sh " sure
g	g " gag	zh	zh " vision
Liquids	l l lull	r	r " roar

NASALS m m m as in may, n n n as in no, ng ng ng as in sing
New Capitals. S (sice) H (thin) D (thick)

The English Language has a great
future. But there must be harmony
between the Written and Spoken word.

Chas Sumner



Abou Ben Adhem.

Abou Ben Adhem (mà hiz trib incrés!)
Awoc wun nit from a dép drém ov pés.
And sau in thi moonlit within hiz room,
Mácing it rich and lic a lili in bloom,
An ángel riteng in a buc ov góld:
Ecséding pés had mág Ben Adhem bold:
And tū thi prezens in thi room hé sed,
"Hwot ritest thou?" Thi vízhon rázd its hed,
And with a lúc mág ov aul swét accord,
Ansurd—"Thi námz ov thóz hoo luv thi Lord."
"And iz min wun?" sed Abou; "Ná not só."
Réplid thi ángel. Abou spóc mór ló,
But chérili stil; and sed, "I prá thé then,
Rít mé az wun that luvz hiz feló men."
Thi ángel rót and vanisht. Thi necst nit
It cám agen with a grát wáceneng lit,
And shód thi námz hoom luv ov God had blest,
And ló! Ben Adhem'z nám led aul thi rest.

Rootz Ov Lif.

How tu māc Lif wirth living!

Told in Sientific, or troo-Alfabetic Speling.

The Goldeu Root.

Doo az u wud bē dun bil.

Rootz for Māintenth Sentiūr Lif.

Et les,	Choo mōr.
Clōth les,	Bāth mōr.
Wure les,	Rest mōr.
R id les.	Waauc mōr.
Wuti les,	Plā mōr.
Tauc les.	Lisn mōr.
Prēch les,	Practis mōr.
Shurc les,	Help mōr.

(P.J. Sweeney, A.X. at a Convention of Official Reporters)

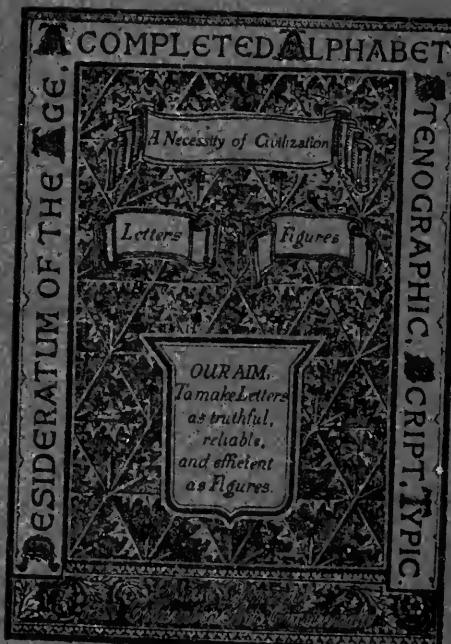
A wurthi sitizen ov New Hampshire, latli seli-brāted thi wun hundred and fōrth anivursari ov his burth. Meni frendz asembld tu congratulāt thi wurthi grand-kaathur. Thi newizitiv inturviur, bēing prezent, aset him tu tel thi sécret ov his long lif. "I dōnt nō," replid thi sāj, "ecsept it bē that I tac thingz az thā cum!"

The new "maeron" sion, a dot, makes the Vowel long.

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